



**American
Red Cross**

Connecticut Blood Services Region

**American Red Cross
Statement to the Committee on Public Health
State of Connecticut General Assembly– Proposed Bill 5732
February 27, 2013**

***Testimony of Donna M. Morrissey, Director of Communications
American Red Cross – Northeast Division***

Chairpersons Representative Susan Johnson, Senator Terry Gerratana and Members of the Committee on Public Health:

My name is **Donna Morrissey**. I am the Director of Communications for the American Red Cross Blood Services – Northeast Division, encompassing thirteen states, including Connecticut.

I also serve on the American Red Cross National Advanced Public Affairs Team. I have been deployed over 14 times for Disaster Relief starting with Hurricane Katrina. Recently, I was deployed to New York City in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy and I also served on Cape Cod during the historic February blizzard.

On December 14, I responded to Newtown along with 170 Red Cross volunteers who answered the call for help. We stood arm-in-arm to assist our neighbors and first responders during this unimaginable tragedy. At the outset of this response, the Red Cross provided more than 50 requested units of blood, platelets and plasma to Danbury Hospital. Sadly, more blood was not needed to help additional patients. My heart and prayers remain with the community of Newtown. But I saw first hand how important it is to have a sufficient blood supply for the communities we serve.

I am here today on behalf of the American Red Cross to oppose Proposed Bill Number 5732 because I do not fundamentally believe that a registered nurse must be present at every Red Cross blood drive to maintain safety standards. The American Red Cross is the nation's largest blood collection organization, supplying more than 40 percent of the blood and blood products used in our country. The American Red Cross operates in accordance with U.S. FDA (Food and Drug Administration) and AABB (American Association of Blood Banks standards in addition to our own high standards to uphold safety. Such nursing requirements are not mandated by the FDA or AABB. It is not a requirement of the American Red Cross in any state in which we collect blood.

I proud to be a blood donor of ten years' standing, and in the last six months, two of my beloved family members needed emergency blood transfusions to stay alive. Both the donors and Red Cross staff are heroes to me because they answered the call for help when my family needed blood. I can assure you as a blood donor, family member of blood recipients and Red Cross staff member, that safety remains a top priority for us at the American Red Cross. I recognize the important contribution that our nurses make, as well as our technicians, supervisors, technologists, quality assurance staff, physicians and all who play a vital role in serving both blood donors and patients.

For over 60 years, the Red Cross Blood Region in Connecticut has been entrusted by Connecticut's hospitals to steward the state's blood supply and ensure blood is available for patients such as trauma victims, cancer patients, a patient undergoing an organ transplant, a baby newly born or a young mother in childbirth. As the nation's single largest supplier of blood products and specialized laboratory services to more than 3,000 hospitals and transfusion centers, we take our lifesaving mission seriously.

Thank you for your consideration opposing this important legislation.